

The Light of Knowledge: Literacy Activism and the Politics of Writing in South India



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(Kaelyn Reichel)

THE LIGHT OF KNOWLEDGE: LITERACY ACTIVISM AND THE POLITICS OF WRITING IN SOUTH INDIA

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Orient BlackSwan, New Delhi, India, 2013. Hardcover. Book Condition: New. Dust Jacket Condition: New. The Arivoli Iyakkam (the Enlightenment Movement) is considered to be among the most successful mass literacy movements in recent history. Led by activists from the peoples science network and the progressive writers association, the Arivoli Iyakkam worked in conjunction with district-level administration to encourage active citizenship among the most oppressed classes in rural Tamil Nadu. In *The Light of Knowledge*, Francis Codys ethnography of this social movement and government program highlights the paradoxes inherent in such movements that seek to emancipate people through literacy when literacy is a power-laden social practice in its own right. *The Light of Knowledge* is set primarily in the rural district of Pudukkottai and it is about activism among laboring women from marginalized communities who have been particularly active as learners and volunteers in the movement. In their endeavors to remake the Tamil countryside through literacy activism, workers in the movement found that their own understanding of the politics of writing and Enlightenment was often transformed. Indeed, while activists of the movement successfully mobilized large numbers of rural women, they did so through logics that often pushed against the very Enlightenment rationality they hoped to foster. Offering a rare behind-the-scenes look at an important area of activism, *The Light of Knowledge* engages with critical social theories of language and citizenship. This book will appeal to a range of readers interested in sociology, feminism, development studies, and education. Printed Pages: 272.



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